

Message Text

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43

ACTION OES-05

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UNCLAS PARIS 00731

DEPT FOR OES/SCI/AE, PASS AEC & COMMERCE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH

SUBJECT: URANIUM ENRICHMENT: FRENCH MAGNETIC BEARING
SYSTEM

1. SUMMARY: A LEADING FRENCH CONSTRUCTOR OF ROCKET
ENGINES IS SEEKING TO MARKET A MAGNETIC BEARING
SYSTEM WHICH IT CLAIMS HAS BEEN TESTED ON A 3-METER
GAS CENTRIFUGE AT 60,000 RPM WITH RESULTS
SHOWING A GREATER DURABILITY AND LOWER OPERATING COSTS
THAN KNOWN RIVAL SYSTEMS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE DIRECTOR, MICHEL DE VERNEJOUL, AND THE
COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR, JACQUES LIPIEC, OF THE SOCIETE
EUROPEENNE DE PROPULSION APPROACHED SCIATT AND COMAFF
FOR ASSISTANCE IN CONTACTING AMERICAN FIRMS WHICH
MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN A MAGNETIC BEARING SYSTEM
DEVELOPED BY S.E.P. ORIGINALLY FOR SPATIAL APPLICA-
TIONS. THEY SAID THAT THE MAGNETIC BEARING SYSTEM
HAD BEEN TESTED ON A GAS CENTRIFUGE OF 3 METERS IN
LENGTH WITH A ROTARY SPEED OF 60,000 RPM, AND THAT THE
RESULTS INDICATED THAT SUCH A SYSTEM COULD DOUBLE OR
TRIPLE THE DURABILITY OF HIGH-SPEED CENTRIFUGES, AS
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WELL AS REDUCE OPERATING COSTS SIGNIFICANTLY. BASED

ON THESE TEST RESULTS, S.E.P. HAS RECEIVED A CONTRACT FROM THE FRENCH NUCLEAR AGENCY (CEA) FOR FURTHER STUDIES ON THE APPLICATION OF MAGNETIC BEARING SYSTEMS FOR GAS CENTRIFUGES USED IN ISOTOPIC SEPARATION OF URANIUM. THEY CLAIM ALSO TO HAVE A CONTRACT FROM COMSAT FOR SPATIAL APPLICATIONS OF THE SYSTEM.

3. THE S.E.P. OFFICIALS ASKED FOR NAMES OF AMERICAN COMPANIES INTERESTED IN URANIUM ENRICHMENT. IN RESPONSE, THEY WERE GIVEN THE NAMES OF SEVERAL SUCH FIRMS (EXXON, WESTINGHOUSE, GE). HOWEVER, WE DID NOT HAVE ON HAND THE NAMES OF MANUFACTURERS OF HIGH SPEED CENTRIFUGES THEMSELVES. REQUEST THE DEPT PASS US THIS INFORMATION.

4. SOCIETE EUROPEENNE DE PROPULSION (3 AVE. DU GENERAL DE GAULLE, 92080PUTEAUX) IS A LEADING FRENCH CONSTRUCTOR OF ROCKET ENGINES FOR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN USES. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY ARE BUILDING ALL 3 STAGES OF THE ARIANNE AND THE DIAMANT SPACE LAUNCHERS AS WELL AS SEVERAL MILITARY SOLID STAGE ROCKETS SUCH AS THE PLUTON NUCLEAR WARHEAD MISSILE.

5. FOR EC BRUSSELS: S.E.P. WAS ALSO REFERRED TO USAEC EUROPEAN REP.
RUSH

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